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IN THE  
prints of De Nonville



Real Paper, Descriptive of a Visit to the Sites of  
Ancient Seneca Villages of Gannagaro, or St. James,  
Hopewell, Ontario Co., N. Y., and Gannagaræ, or St.  
James, in East Bloomfield, Ontario Co., N. Y.,  
July, 1892.

IRVING W. COATES.

The Locusts, Hopewell, N. Y., July, 1892.

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Buffalo Historical Society

With Compliments of the Author,

July 14<sup>th</sup> 1893

## INTRODUCTION.



presenting this sketch of the invasion of Denonville's army into what is now Ontario County, N. Y., the author is well aware of its many defects in its crude and unfinished character as a literary production. But we beg the kind reader to remember that our study of Indian history, life, and customs, has been but a relaxation from many perplexing business cares, and

other. Yet, amid these formidable difficulties and conflicting opinions, we have honestly tried from the evidence at our disposal, to give to both parties to this memorable event in our local history, an impartial judgment, which we think will be born out by subsequent investigators more worthy of the task. We have not undertaken the labor to gain any fame or reward.

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Article 6, read "village of importance," instead of "village with importance."

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This is owing, doubtless, to the circumstance, that the Indian has left no written history and that the whites in their intercourse with them have been swayed by passion or prejudice that their accounts are often very unreliable. Further, the whites in their zeal to occupy the rich heritage of the Aborigines, have striven to obliterate, as it were, every trace, every repository, rude as they are, of the Indian annals or traditions. Hence, it is almost impossible at times to take up the broken thread and form a satisfactory connection between the events of one decade and those of an-

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# INTRODUCTION.



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The Locusts.  
June 23, 1893.

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# In the Footprints of Denonville.

WRITTEN FOR THE TIMES BY IRVING W. COATES.

**The French Marquis Lands at Irondequoit, July, 1687—Louis XIV's Absolutism Contrasted with the Iroquois Democracy.**

Perhaps there is no one historical event or episode in the early history of Western New York that has attracted such widespread interest among antiquarians and scholars as the expedition of the Marquis Denonville against the Tsonnontonans, or Senecas, in the month of July, 1687.

This is owing, doubtless, partly to the fact that it distinguishes a period otherwise not particularly marked by any other notable event of a military nature, from other epochs of our early Indian history, which have no such glamour thrown around them, and partly because of the insight which it gives us, through the intercourse of the French, of the inner life and peculiar character of the most warlike and numerous of all the tribes of the great Iroquois Confederacy.

Another reason, perhaps, why so much interest centers about this memorable expedition, undertaken against a foe known to be wily, brave, and the masters of deep stratagem in battle and skillful diplomacy in council, is that nearly all of our previous knowledge of this particular nation of red men, who subsequently achieved so much fame amid the changing scenes of our local theater of action, was of the most vague and uncertain nature, made up almost entirely, in fact, from misty legendary lore, or the uncertain or magnified stories of casual traders among them.

The expedition of Denonville, his veterans wearing the gorgeous royal uniforms of "La Belle France," the silken standards of the magnificent Louis XIV waving at the head of their columns, and their march through the Genesee forests enlivened by the stir-

ring strains of martial music, marked an event that swept the mists of centuries from before the faces of these red forest Romans, and revealed to the world a race of patriots and heroes in the wilds of Gaensera [1], of whom it never had dreamed.

Still another reason why this event will ever have such a charm in the estimation of the antiquarian, the Indianologist, and the historian, is that it denotes a period in the annals of the Senecas when overtures of peace and blandishments of flattery were forsaken, and the most chivalrous race of Europe strove by sheer force of arms to coerce and subdue the most chivalrous race of Indian warriors who ever bent a bow or wielded a hatchet.

The theater upon which this dramatic episode was enacted lends also a charm to its surroundings of such picturesque beauty that the muse of Poetry will vie with her sister muse of History, in bringing to our view through the advancing years, all the varied phases of its tragic scenes.

On the southern shore of that "waste of waters," clear and blue as the firmament above them, Old Ontario, once known as the "Lake of the Iroquois," in that beautiful land-locked bay of Irondequoit, held in such veneration by the Senecas that they refused long years after that a "white man's trading fort" should be erected there, the flotilla of the invader swept to its anchorage. His officers, gay with trappings, and confident of an easy victory over their savage foe, leaped lightly upon the sand, and with jocund laughter and polite salutations at this pleasant termination of their voyage, gave orders to the grim soldiers to disembark and form the encampment preparatory to their march upon the Indian capital.



Denonville, clad in rich dress, as became him as the viceroy of his King and master in this, his western domain, had his marquee pitched by faithful followers on the most favorable spot, and, surrounded by lieutenants high in rank, on whose breasts flashed jewels of royal orders, and the royal, lily-bedecked ensign of their country waving above them, took the first aggressive step in the pathway they had marked out with so much care, to subdue the haughty Senecas, and inaugurate a semblance of French martial pomp on the shores of the Genesee.

When we take into consideration the nature of the institutions viewed in a governmental light, which these two opposing races were about to engage in deadly combat to maintain in our then forest wilds, a new and absorbing interest attaches to every move in the drama, and we read on and on with increasing zest to the very end of the chapter.

Louis XIV., unfortunately for France and for the rich provinces which were founded by her on the shores of America, imbibed to a greater degree, perhaps, than any other monarch of his time the pernicious doctrine that Kings ruled "by Divine Right." The people over whom he claimed sovereignty were the merest vassals—tools with which he could work out his ambitious and far-reaching projects. That his subjects at home or abroad were *men*—that they had rights in common with himself which he should respect, was an idea that not for one single moment claimed his attention. He was their *king*, descended from a long line of princely rulers, hence he was their lord and master, before whose will they all must bow, and whose wishes were the laws of the realm.

His reign, beginning [2] as glorious as any of that epoch, with the brilliant Colbert at the head of the national finances, the inventive and skillful Vauban to lead his armies and fortify his cities, and Louvois, called "the greatest and most brutal of clerks" to organize his army on a scale of effectiveness

that was the envy of Europe, and above all the most united and best situated kingdom on the Continent, behind which were twenty millions of faithful subjects to do his bidding, surely his reign should have resulted in glory to France and lasting benefits to her people.

And such, indeed, would have been the case through all coming time, if Louis, who, according to Mazarin [3], "had stuff enough in him to make four kings and an honest man," had but regarded the needs and rights of his own people and those who came under his sway by conquest. But this proud prince of the Bourbons was the first of all his race to throw aside the limitations which had been imposed on his predecessors, and with one bound assumed absolute sovereignty in his own person as the master of his subjects. He went even further, and, in accordance with his feudal ideas, regarded himself as the proprietor of their estates, a doctrine so monstrous that in the language of the gifted Durny [4], "it carries us back to the midst of the Oriental monarchies."

Hence this strange theory, so strongly maintained through his reign by this monarch, must be regarded as the bane and curse of his administration of the affairs of France. For Louis XIV. was in many respects a model king. He was industrious, and he impressed the value and dignity of labor upon all with whom he came in contact. He was brilliant and cultured, and gathered around him the most brilliant and cultured minds of the period. He honored bravery, rewarded talent, and gave an impetus to agriculture, commerce, and trade that placed France in the front rank of European states. Yet, with all his skill, his sagacity, his bravery, and his culture, so obstinately did he cling to the narrow view with which he set out of "Divine right" that in 1675, immediately preceding the famous expedition of Denonville to our local region, by the revocation of the edict of Nantes, he not only alienated the affections of hundreds of thousands of his faithful Protestant subjects, sent them in exile to every clime, and opened

the way for the most signal disasters to France, but sowed seeds of discord in her provinces that weakened her cause and tarnished her good name.

How different from this were the principles of governmental unity and freedom for which their copper-hued adversaries had bent the bow and burnished the hatchet to oppose the progress of this Christian host in their forest domain! For hundreds of years these simple sons of Nature, these "red savages of the woods," as their cultured European brethren termed them, had solved the great democratic problem of self-government, and had established on the shores of the West, without written constitution or broad seal, the "inherent right" of every member of their confederacy to equal voice and equal privilege in every movement that affected the public weal. Greece and Rome, ages before, with all their advancement in learning had sought in vain to perpetuate a principle of governmental science that Denonville found upheld in all its purity and grandeur by bands of Iroquois warriors, here on the soil of Western New York, in 1687.

[To be Continued.]

1. Name given by Abbe Belmont, and other French writers, to the country of the Senecas.

2. See Victor Durny's History of France, page 430.

3. See Life and Letters of Cardinal Mazarin.

4. See Victor Durny's History of France, page 411.

#### The Suicidal Policy of Louis the XIV.— Denonville's March Through the Genesee Country Begun—Preliminary Observations.

And what a spectacle was this! A host of so-called Christian men, with burnished arms, waving plumes, gilded ensigns, and all the accessories of royal pomp, standing on the shore of old Iron-quoit, as the representatives of absolute sovereignty over the lives, property, and consciences of men, who had traversed weary leagues by sea and land.

"To scathe with sword and blast with fire,  
This blooming vale of the Genesee,  
Lovely as dell in Arcady." \*

To oppose them on that hot July day, there stood a small and Spartan band. No banners waved, no note of brazen trumpet nerved them for the strife, but they were warriors true and tried. Men of princely lineage though of dusky hue, and proud that they upheld all that was dear to their fathers. Strange as it may seem to us of to-day, to that little band of Senecas was entrusted those grand principles of self-government, of freedom, and the inalienable rights of man, which to-day are the pride and boast of not only our own grand Republic, but of France, the land which sent the army of Denonville, in that period so long ago.

Before proceeding to a description of Old Gannagaro, the famous Seneca capital, against which this formidable armament, consisting of 2,000 regulars and militia, and a 1,000 friendly Indians, was thus directed, we beg the readers' kind indulgence for a brief period, while we digress from the subject of our paper, and relate some of the causes which actuated this bold invasion, and the Senecas' brave resistance to the same.

In the language of W. H. C. Hosmer, whom we proudly call our "Bard of Avon," and whose memory will be revered through long generations of dwellers in this, our "Eden of the Genesee," the Senecas [5], "enraged by continued infraction of their territory, during the administration of De la Barre, by the passage of French trading parties to the Southwest, laden with material to arm their enemies, the Senecas began hostilities by



wresting from them their powder and lead, seizing their canoes, and dismissing them, homeward, with threats of torture and death if they ever returned. In his instructions to the French Governor, Denonville, on the receipt of the alarming intelligence, Louis XIV., recommended a prompt invasion of the hostile country, and directed that all prisoners of war taken in the campaign, when opportunity offered, should be shipped to France, remarking in his dispatch that *"the Iroquois, being stout and robust, would serve with advantage in his galleys."*

What a suicidal step was this on the part of that proud Bourbon monarch, who ruled with a rod of iron the fairest kingdom of Europe! To attempt thus to enslave a high spirited people, men whose proudest boast was, that "they were men born to be free," was, in the words of the same gifted author whom we have just quoted, "a long stride on the part of French America toward certain destruction."

Thus, in the service of his tyrant master, Louis XIV., Denonville, anxious only to serve that master well, stood upon that memorable 10th of July, 1687, and with feelings of pride saw pass in review before him on the clear waters of the bay, his warlike array of veteran troops and painted allies of another race.

After erecting a small palisade fort on an elevated site to protect his bateaux and canoes, some 400 in number, and his military stores, in which he placed a small garrison, he set out on the march which will forever associate his name with our local region.

The exact route of this march has been the subject of much speculation and controversy. But setting aside the many vague theories which have been advanced respecting it, as unworthy of our attention, because they are mere theories, without anything to prove them, and studying carefully the topographical features of the country, as well as the official account of the commander and the interesting histories of La Hontan and the Abbe de Belmont, we can locate its route quite accurately.

ly. Further, of late years there have been several thorough investigations by eminent antiquarians, that would seem to put to rest forever all idle speculation concerning it.

In 1847, O. H. Marshall, Esq., of Buffalo, with the official account of Denonville, which he had previously translated from the French, visited this region and made a map of the march from Irondequoit, and located from evidence that seems indisputable, the exact site of the famous battle ground to which we shall soon call the readers' attention. That Mr. Marshall was thorough in his investigations, and came very near the truth, is proven by the fact that the most trustworthy explorers, from that time until now, have been in the main forced to coincide in his views. And the most intelligent Indian authorities, notably Brant, and the aged chief Blacksmith, corroborated most fully during their lifetime the location as mapped out by Mr. Marshall.

Hence it seems puerile and weak for Indianologists and antiquarians to contend about facts and positions that have been for years so well established, or to seek to gain a little cheap notoriety by assailing one another in a war of theories, that have not a particle of genuine historical evidence to rest upon. Such controversies are a waste of time and patience, and can in no way advance the cause which it should be their aim to serve, or add one ray of light to enable us to see more clearly the events of the past.

There are those who take the historian to task for daring to make any comments on the events he narrates, or seeks in any manner to draw any conclusions from them. Such readers and critics would have us believe that the motives which have actuated mankind in different epochs, were not a proper subject of inquiry—that they were not the same, and that human ambition, selfishness, and lust, in all their relations to history, were not the same in the past that they are to-day.

To such we would say, take away from the grand works of Hume, of Gibbon, and of Macaulay, their scholarly

deductions—speculations, if you will—based on the events of the epochs of which they wrote, and the character of the participants in those events, and you rob them of their greatest charm, and their narratives become but receptacles for the dry husks and uninteresting repetitions of history. But the moment those events are brought beneath the keen analysis of those master minds, and the character of the actors in them are held up to our view, stripped of every artifice or concealment, a fascination is imparted to the picture that invests it with new interest, and we eagerly follow the recital to the end.

There is yet another class of critics, who insist upon the veriest minutiae of detail, and claim that any description of localities or events is not worthy of attention, unless every simple fact and incident is related in alphabetical order, and with a precision of statement that would confound the most skillful devotee of mathematical science. Now it may be a matter of the greatest historical interest, and one fraught with the most momentous consequences, for us of the present to know exactly whether the regimentals of Gen. George Washington, the illustrious Commander-in-Chief of our armies in the Revolution, were new and clean, or soiled and weather stained by constant exposure in the saddle, on that memorable field of Monmouth, June 28, 1778; yet, we rather incline to the opinion that his heroic conduct on that bloody and unfortunate field, his prompt and severe rebuke of Lee for his cowardice and treachery, and his dauntless bearing at every point of danger, will have a far greater interest to all true historical students through the generations yet to come.

In the preparation of this simple sketch we do not expect to please either class of critics to which we have alluded, as we cannot promise to entirely abstain from all comment, or, perhaps, indulging in a little speculation respecting various matters that may claim our attention, being, of course, solely responsible for the same. On the other hand, neither can we give such a minute and elaborate description of places and events as we could wish, for it must be remembered that the mists of more than two centuries have settled over the scene, and but few evidences remain to us of to-day, from the destroying finger of time, to guide us in our investigations. But with pure and honorable motives, with a sincere desire to establish the truth of history, so far as it is possible to do so at this time, from the most authentic sources, standing on the sites of Old Gannagaro and Gannagare as they are to-day, with all their surroundings spread out before us, we trust we may add a little interest to their story, by simply telling what we learn by historical research and our own observation, leaving to the readers' imagination and kind indulgence all the rest.

\* Onnalinda, Page 32.

[5] See W. H. C. Hosmer's chapter on the Senecas, Turner's History, Phelps & Gorham Purchase, page 94.



**The March from Irondequoit—Surprised by the Senecas—The French Army Narrowly Escapes Utter Wreck—Gannagaro in Ruins.**

The march from Irondequoit along the narrow trails marked out by the Indian through the forests of the Genesee, was a new experience to the veterans of Denonville. Accustomed as they had been to execute their movements on the fine roads, broad avenues, and wide, cultivated fields of Europe, this novel way of advancing was to them anything but an agreeable task. To add to the discomforts of the dust and heat of the hot July day on which they set out, they soon suffered from excessive thirst, and the warm and brackish water of the springs and creeks along their route gave them but an indifferent beverage to allay it. Their regular formation was soon broken, and their commander saw that he must adopt a new system of tactics, in conformity to their forest surroundings. The hardy French trappers, from the remote stations at the West, and their Indian allies, who were at home in the forest, served them in good stead, and gave them lessons in woodcraft that were of the greatest value. Denonville was a true Frenchman, an officer of merit, cautious and brave, and although he had served for thirty years in the armies of his Sovereign, unlike Braddock, who led a similar expedition years after, he thought it no dishonor to glean all the information possible from even the most humble of his followers, to aid him in discharging the trying duties of his position. Yet, with all his merits as a soldier, it must be admitted at this length of time that he was a most obsequious courtier, and in order to flatter his master, the King, he stooped to traduce the character of his brave adversaries, and falsify his reports to his government concerning the expedition which he led [6].

Under all the disadvantages attending them, this motley army gained, on the first day, July 12, but three leagues [7]. As the Senecas had watched with eagle eye the coming of this formidable

force into their territory, and as Denonville knew, notwithstanding all his claims to his Sovereign to the contrary, that he had no ordinary foe to contend with, he took the utmost care in forming this his first encampment on the march.

The French regulars and the Christian Indians from the St. Lawrence, upon whom he felt that he could rely with far more certainty than the Ottawa and others from the West, notwithstanding their great professions of bravery, he placed in the center and in the rear of the encampment, close to his own person, while the Western Indians and the most trustworthy of the Canadian militia he caused to be stationed at the front, with double lines of pickets, to give promptly the first warning of danger. That it was an anxious night to the Marquis, we can well imagine, and at the first sign of day, the camp was astir, and soon the host was again moving over the rough line of highlands to the eastward.

On the 13th of July, the second day of their march, the sun came out in all its brilliancy and shed a blaze of heat upon the devoted heads of this column thus wending its way through the woods. The heavy accouterments of the French, and the supply of blankets and clothing which they had brought from a colder clime, added not a little to their discomfort, while the many who were footsore from the journey complained most bitterly of the rough paths they were compelled to traverse. Add to this the effect of their long and cramped voyage in the batteaux upon the lake, and the poor water, and the exposure in this new climate, which Denonville says produced "a kind of rheum, which put every one out of humor" [8], and we perceive that this famous French contingent which had come so far to "humble the spirit of the haughty Senecas," was in rather a bad way itself.

But their officers kept them well to their work, and they came to deep and dangerous defiles, where they were apprehensive of danger, but passed safely through. Thus they journeyed on, each

mile giving them some new experience, and adding to their fatigue. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon of this hot and uncomfortable day, the advance guard, under M. de Calliers, which was some distance in front of the main body, under Denonville [10], just as they were entering a darker and more dangerous defile than any which they had traversed that day, were thrown into the wildest confusion by an attack of the Senecas, as sudden and as irresistible as the thunderbolt, who after discharging their guns, rushed upon the foe with their hatchets, and in the terrible onslaught, says La Hontan, an eye witness, "Battalions separated into platoons that ran pell mell, without order, to the right and to the left, not knowing whither they went" [11]. And says the Abbe de Belmont, so great was the fear of the Senecas, that "the Ottawas all fled as well as the heathen Indians." Nor did the combat of this little Spartan band of Senecas in defence of their homes stop here. Seeing their adversaries flee before their well directed volleys, and the fierce hand to hand encounter which they had inaugurated, they pursued them far beyond their forest ambush, and their bright weapons, flashing in the sunlight, drank deep that day of the crimson fountain of human gore. Not until Denonville by almost superhuman efforts had rallied every force at his command, regulars, militia, and his Christian Indians, who, it must be remembered, were of the Iroquois nation, was their headlong charge checked, and the military fame of the "favorite General of the magnificent Louis" saved from utter wreck. Then, slowly, step by step, did that splendid body of red warriors, "one hundred men and three hundred boys" [12], fall back before the overwhelming numbers of the French, hurling defiance in their faces, and bearing themselves with a proud mien, worthy of the most illustrious knights of old.

In this brief conflict at the close of that sultry July day, so furious had been their onset, and so skillfully had they wielded their weapons, that 100 Frenchmen and ten of their Indian allies

[13] stained with their life blood the soil of that dark ravine. And so terror stricken was that invading host that they stood by their arms on the field of battle, threw up temporary fortifications [14] on the plain, and dared not advance until the morrow.

On the next day, July 14, says the Abbe de Belmont, "we marched in battle order, waiting for an attack," so that according to this very impartial historian, the repulse of the Senecas on the day previous was not of such character as to give Denonville the utmost satisfaction, or to banish from his mind the idea that he was not in constant danger lest his army should be thrown into the same confusion it had already experienced. He used the utmost caution, and it was not until he was satisfied beyond question from the reports of his scouts that the way was clear, and that the enemy, whose prowess he he had felt so severely the day before, did not obstruct his progress, that he quickened his movements and crossed the marsh, where had been laid with so much skill the second Seneca ambuscade. It was from this point (the marsh), says the same genial and interesting writer, "that we began to perceive the famous Babylon of the Tsonnontouans, a city, or village, of bark, situate at the top of a mountain of earth, to which one rises by three terraces or hills. It appeared to us from a distance, to be crowned with round towers, but these were only large chests (drums) of bark, about four feet in length, set the one in another, about five feet in diameter, in which they kept their Indian corn. The village had been burnt by themselves, it was now eight days since, and we found nothing in the town except the cemetery and graves. It was filled with snakes and animals, there was a great mask with teeth and eyes of brass, and a bear skin with which they disguise in their cabins. There were in the four corners great boxes of grain which they had not burned. They had outside this post their Indian corn, in a piquet fort at the top of a little mountain: steps



are cut down on all sides, where it was knee-high throughout the fort."

Thus did Denonville, in royal state, with banners waving and drums beating, at the head of that army which had been raised at such an expense to New France, and which from the 24th of May, in the rendezvous and upon the march, had been constantly moving in this direction, take possession of Gannagaro, the ancient capital of the Senecas. But what a barren victory. What a meager triumph for all his pains, his boasts of subjugation, and the sufferings and privations of his followers. Not only had he not "humbled" the spirit of the Senecas, or curbed their desire for independence, but he had aroused, by his insults, his bravado, and the torture of his helpless captives which he permitted at the hands of his cowardly allies, a besom of wrath in the bosom of every true Iroquois, that was destined to sweep with "bow and brand," amid scenes of carnage and death, every vestige of French power from the soil of the west.

And here upon the smoking ruins of old Gannagaro, he had his first view of the effects of that policy of hate, of absolute tyranny over the lives and property of men, established by his Sovereign, which carries naught but unhappiness and destruction in its train. Instead of finding a capital fair to the view, crowned with spoils and treasures and plenty, over which he might gloat as a conqueror, and destroy, he found that the hands of a brave and patriotic people had applied the torch to their own homes, and his was the scant honor, the ignoble gain, to find, as the historian of his expedition says: "the cemetery and the grave."

The only thing that the conqueror found in this "large city or village," as he terms it, which was not destroyed, was the large store of Indian corn, that grain so sacred in the eyes of the red man, the "life-giving nourishment" from the hand of the Great Spirit, which he held in such veneration that to destroy which, was an act of vandalism so base that no Indian could be found depraved enough to do the foul deed. [15] Not even the

skulking and cowardly Ottawas, whose poltroony he had so recently witnessed, would obey the orders of Denonville, on that 15th day of July, to lift a hand to either ruin the heaps of gathered grain, or strike down the tall stalks growing for the harvest. This task so revolting to the Indians' sense of right, who looked upon it as an affront to the very Giver of Good, was left to the Frenchmen, the soldiers of his "most Christian Majesty," Louis XIV., who had come from over the sea to do his bidding. Thus were the bright sabres which they had failed to wield against their savage adversaries, and the burnished axes with which they had fondly hoped to awe the proud Senecas into submission, put to the ignoble duty of warring against the unoffending fields of waving corn and the storehouses that contained the surplus. If Denonville is worthy of praise for such warfare as this—if he should be crowned with the laurel wreath and be given a place among the great conquerors of the earth for such deeds, then let the brazen trumpets of fame sound his peans, but the impartial muse of history will write her edict of disapproval through the long ages yet to come, in characters that will never fade.

So much for this famous march from the sands of Irondequoit; so much for this famous battle, fought amid the hills and defiles of Ganesara, in which a little band of Indian warriors surprised a veteran General in broad day, routed his advance guard, and would have put his whole army to flight but for a succession of most unfortunate circumstances; and so much for the triumphal entry of Jaques Rene de Brisay Chevalier Seigneur Marquis de Denonville and his host into the ancient capital of the Senecas.

All that long day did his valiant soldiers, wearing the livery of their King, wage brave warfare against the tall ranks of corn waving their silken tassels in the breeze, and to the credit of the corn be it said, that being of pure American birth, reared on a soil most favorable to the growth of the spirit and essence of resistance to tyranny,

not a hill forsook its position, or a single stalk yielded an inch of ground until the stained and dripping blades of the gallant French warriors leveled it to the earth where it stood. The "small piquet fort on the little mountain," too, was not forgotten, and soon the tall stockade and the great piles of corn within, that would have furnished so much sustenance to friend and foe, were beneath the Frenchman's torch, a mass of flaming, glowing, blackened, and smoldering ruins.

[6] Compare the accounts of the Abbe de Belmont with Denonville's Official Report.

[7] See Denonville's Official Report (Paris, Doc. III).

[8] See Denonville's Report (Paris, Doc. III).

[9] La Hontan's Account.

[10] Doc. History N. Y., page 248, vol. I.

[11] La Hontan's Account.

[12] Doc. History of N. Y., page 250, vol. I.

"Gannagaro" was on Boughton Hill, Victor—The Principal Capital of the Senecas—The French again Victorious in Battle.

Gannagaro, the "large village," toward which Denonville's march had thus been directed, was situated on what is now known as Boughton Hill, in the present town of Victor, Ontario County, N. Y. The name thus given to this ridge or elevation is derived from Jared and Enos Boughton, two worthy pioneers who came from Stockbridge, Mass., about the year 1788, and here carved out an opening in the heavy forests for future civilization and improvement. They were men of great worth and most positive character, and their families have contributed not a few of the many illustrious names which glorify the early annals of Western New York [15]. The earliest account which we have of this celebrated Seneca capital, other than that, perhaps, of the Jesuit missionaries, was published by Wentworth Greenhalgh, in some observations which he makes relative to a "Journey from Albany to ye Indians, Westward; Begun, May 20, 1677, and Ended July ye 14th. Following." From this "journal" we learn that Gannagaro, or, as he calls it, Canagorah, "lies on the top of a great hill, and in that, and in as well as the bignesse, much like Onondago (Onondaga), containing 150 houses." While this meager description of the largest and most celebrated city or castle of the Iroquois at that period, in the quaint language of the Albany trader, is far from satisfactory, it nevertheless conveys to our minds something of the importance of its position as such capital. For, not only did the French authorities of New France dread its influence and power and were most anxious to impress upon the minds of its Sachems the glory and magnificence of their Sovereign, but the English at Albany, with the watchful Governor Dongan at their head, took every pains, by the distribution of arms and ammunition, and rich articles of dress, among its chief men, to open the way for friendly treaties and most valuable franchises in the future. Gannagaro was most distinctly the



capital of the Seneca nation: for here resided the chief Sachem and his council of subordinates, and here, upon certain stated periods, the chiefs of the other castles or villages, held consultations in reference to all that concerned the welfare of the tribal State. Here were received the ambassadors of other nations, both white and red, and from here strong columns of warriors went out to battle with foes near and remote. Here were brought the unhappy captives to learn their fate, here was the pipe of peace smoked, and here were the glittering strings of wampum, held up by proud chiefs, in token of royal promise or kingly favor. Here the Jesuit fathers came in their lonely journeys through the forests, and with all their artifice and eloquence sought to wield control over the hearts and consciences of the simple sons of nature, as yet uncontaminated to any extent by contact with the vices of civilization. These pious or crafty missionaries, term them as you will, called this town St. James, and although they exerted their greatest zeal to bring its inhabitants under their sway, both in a spiritual and temporal sense, it would appear from all the evidence we can gather, that here, notwithstanding their great labors, they met with the least success of any point in their field of endeavor, and were powerless to curb the spirit of Seneca independence, or woo them in any great degree from the traditions and practices of their fathers' simple religious faith.

This is proven from the fact that when the French, by perfidious means, had dared to send in chains across the sea, members of the Iroquois race, as captives, to grace the triumphs of Louis in the New World, the Jesuits, notwithstanding the great respect that had been shown them by every nation in the Confederacy, were obliged to flee for their lives before the righteous indignation of a proud and injured people. Not even all the virtues of the saintly Father Lamberville, whom the Onondagas loved so well, could avert the terrible storm of war: and true to their chivalrous nature he was conducted to

a place of safety, given an escort, and sent to his friends among the French.

Boughton Hill is rather a singular formation, even when viewed from the "drift" standpoint, and a most prominent object in the landscape of this local region. Its course is nearly north and south, bearing off a little, perhaps, toward an eastward direction, and continuing, with more or less change, nearly or quite to the shores of Canandaigua lake. Upon its summit for quite a long distance it has a large area of what would be termed table land, rich and productive, and upon this plateau are located several beautiful farms, with large and commodious buildings, extensive orchards of fruit, and everything that betokens thrift and plenty. The northern portion of the hill was cut through in building the old Auburn branch of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, many years ago, and the traveler may view the wall erected to prevent the earth from falling upon the road-bed, and the elevation itself, from the car windows on the south side of the track at the cosy little station of Victor.

The site of Gannagaro is on the farm of Mr. Moore, about one mile directly south of the station. The highway leading along the ridge or elevation, and which extends to the Batavia branch of the New York Central at East Bloomfield station, follows very nearly the old Indian trail that led from Gannagaro to the smaller village of Gannagorae, on the Ganargua, south, which trail, some three or four miles from Gannagaro, was intersected by others which led westward to the towns on the Honeoye, and eastward to Canandaigua lake and its outlet. This road or trail extends through a wild and romantic region, and even to this day bears many evidences that it was long used as the principal avenue of travel, long years ago, by our Indian predecessors. The interest in viewing this ancient trail is further enhanced by the knowledge of the fact that it must have been the line of march of Denonville's army

after the destruction of the Seneca capital. On the day we visited it and noted its features, so wild and unchanged did we find it at many points that we often started involuntarily, expecting to see some stalwart Seneca warrior challenge our further progress, or some weary French soldier drag his slow march along the narrow path, or amid the green thickets which fringed it on either side.

To the north, this elevation upon which old Gannagaro was thus situated is approached by quite abrupt ascents, more or less broken by ravines and hollows that run in various directions. To the east, there is quite a steep descent, terminating in long sweeps of rich, level land. To the south, the hill or ridge continues with nearly the same characteristics for several miles in extent. To the west, it is very irregular and broken in outline, and in some places skirted by a marsh. These marshes, for there are several of them, are quite deep and wide, overgrown with flags and alders, and stretch nearly around the northwestern portion of the hill on which the central part of the town was situated. To the west of this marsh, which thus skirts the foot of the elevation, there winds a creek of considerable size, flowing in a general north and south direction, about half way between the site of Gannagaro and Fort Hill, which arises in very steep ascent, just across the flats to the westward.

This creek, thus fringed with marshes and a heavy growth of alders and other bushes and trees peculiar to such a locality, and flowing in a serpentine course between such high elevations as Boughton Hill and Fort Hill, must have presented, before the forests were cleared away from its banks, no mean obstacle to the passage of either friend or foe. In fact, the soft, spongy nature of the ground rendered it extremely difficult to gain a secure foothold, while the thick foliage which almost overshadowed the stream itself, artfully concealed the danger which lurked upon every hand. This treacherous spot, with its soft and miry soil, its damp and shad-

owy recesses, and its mysterious stillness, was chosen, according to the best evidence we can gather, by the Senecas, as the seat of their second ambushade [15].

Here were stationed 500 red warriors, concealed in the dense forest covering, who, the moment their brothers, stationed at the upper ambushade, in the thicket of beech trees at the foot of the defile through which the French were advancing [16], should by their fierce charge and terrible war whoop, throw their enemies into confusion and force them towards the stream winding among the dark alders: were to rise as one man, and pouring in a destructive volley of bullets and arrows, spring with the fleetness of the panther upon the foe, and deal with war club and hatchet, blows that would open the crimson tide of war to the full.

It was a trap well laid, a movement skillfully planned, and worthy of generals of a more civilized and polished race. It was a piece of military strategy that went a long way toward reducing the advantages possessed by a large force over a smaller one, and came near, on that memorable day in our local annals, of crowning the little Spartan band of Seneca warriors thus fighting in defence of their homes, whom Hosmer declares, "scarcely outnumbered the French rear guard," with the laurels of victory.

But the best laid plans of men often go astray. The skillful strategy, the close computation in regard to numbers, the keen insight into the movements and designs of an adversary, which marks the highest type of the military leader, often are misleading, and projects that seem almost certain of successful and brilliant fulfilment, often fail from the most unlooked for and trivial causes. Had it not been for the torrents of rain that fell on the morning of the 18th of June, 1815, which delayed the attack of Napoleon on the forces of Wellington until near noon, no student of history doubts but that the terrible story of Waterloo would have had a far different ending. Had Montcalm not placed such supreme



confidence in the strength of his position, and the frowning batteries planted on the walls of Quebec, and had been more vigilant to guard every avenue of approach from the St. Lawrence, the tri-color of France might be waving to-day over the cities and plains of Canada. Had Lee at Gettysburg not have been so dilatory, and advanced and occupied Cemetery Heights, which he might easily have done on the first day of the battle, that glorious victory on the part of the North might be blotted out of our annals forever.

So it was with our brave little band of Senecas on the day they met Denonville's proud host. The attack had been most skillfully planned, the orders of the older chieftains were well understood, and every precaution had been taken to insure a triumph, so far as it was possible against such overwhelming numbers. But it seems that that the scouts sent out to watch the march of the French were deceived, and mistook the advance under DeCalliers for the main body under Denonville, and the false reports which they brought in turn deceived the leaders of the warriors at the ambushade, and instead of an attack on the front and rear of the whole invading army, as had been projected, destruction was wreaked upon only the advance, leaving the main force under its commander to rally and retrieve the defeat and disorder of the day. Yet, notwithstanding the blundering upon the right hand and upon the left, that band of Seneca warriors, many of whom were mere boys, heroically contended every inch of ground, and only gave way when the whole French force was brought against them and further resistance was of no avail. Had it not been for this error of the scouts, in mistaking the advance division for the main body, Denonville and his followers would doubtless never have returned to their flotilla, but in the wilds of the Genesee have found a most bloody sepulchre.

[To be Continued.]

[15] See Memoirs of Col. Seymour Boughton, killed at Black Rock, in the war of 1812; also, Col. Claudius Victor Boughton, after whom the town of Victor was named, in 1813, and others.

[16] It is related that the French officers were so frightened at the Senecas' war whoop as to fall prostrate on the ground.

[17] Abbe de Belmont's Account.

Fort Hill in Victor—Remains of an Ancient Stockade—Many Valuable Relics—The Senecas and the Jesuits—The French Turn Toward St. Michael's.

To the west of Boughton Hill (in Victor), nearly on a line with that portion of it upon which the village of Gannagaro was situated, is a steep elevation of very peculiar shape, known in all this local region as "Fort Hill." It is on the farm of Mr. Turner, a most estimable citizen of Victor, and is well worthy of a visit from the antiquarian and student of our early history. It is a natural fortification, and the most skillful engineers of our higher civilization, versed in the military art, could add but little to the superior defences which Dame Nature has thrown around it upon every side. Upon this hill, or as the Abbe Belmont terms it, "little mountain," for such in fact it is, the Senecas had erected a small palisade fort, made of logs some thirteen feet in height, set upright in the earth, so near that a man could not pass between them, in fact, so near that the logs or pickets, when in position in the stockade, presented a continuous line of posts set some three feet in the ground around the entire inclosure. In proof of this, the writer on his first visit to the locality, on the first day of August, 1890, went in company with Mr. Turner, the genial proprietor of the premises, to a deep excavation on the eastern portion of the hill, caused by an extensive "wash-out" during the heavy rains that prevailed during the spring and early summer of that year, and there discovered the remains of a long section of the posts or pickets, much decayed, yet sufficiently well preserved to note accurately their exact position in the stockade, and some of them showing even after the lapse of more than two hundred years, the nature of the wood of which they were composed. The top of every one was chared to the level of the ground, and in some instances even below, showing most plainly the means employed to destroy them. They were mostly oak, and we found sections of some so well preserved in the dry, gray sand of the locality, that we ob-

tained several pieces of the charred wood and quite a number of specimens of the bark which must have been on them when first set in the earth. They are now in the cabinet of the writer, and show very conclusively the agency of charring or partially burning the fiber of wood and a dry, sandy soil of perfect drainage, in preserving it so long.

These posts or pickets varied in size from saplings ten inches in diameter, to trees perhaps a foot and one-half. They were set with great regularity in the form of an ellipse or circle, the small pickets alternating with the larger in a neat and workmanlike manner. The specimens we examined all showed the peculiar structure of wood burned in an upright position, and quite distinct from the appearance of logs burned in a horizontal heap. Hence this is a very strong proof that these pickets must be the remains of the small palisade fortification spoken of by Belmont, La Hontan, and others, burned by orders of Denonville on the morning of the 15th of July, 1687. No other fort of a like character has ever been known to exist here, and hence the conclusion is irresistible that this was the identical Seneca fortress.

Another very strong argument in favor of this position, is that the line of posts or pickets discovered by us through the means of that fortunate "washout" in 1890, corresponds very closely with the description of this famous Indian fort, as described by that eminent Indianologist, George H. Harris, Esq., of Rochester, N. Y., who has made several visits to the locality, in his very interesting pamphlet, entitled "Aboriginal Occupancy of the Lower Genesee Country." He has given us in that work the exact dimensions of this fort and its method of construction, to which the reader is directed for a more detailed account.

It will be remembered that Denonville, after the repulse of his forces at the ambushade on the low grounds, known to-day as the "Victor Flats," kept along the highlands to the west, and rallied his panic-stricken troops.

After restoring some semblance of order he took possession of this fort, and it was here on that day of cowardice and terror to the French, as the Abbe de Belmont informs us, that M. de Calzonne of all the French officers distinguished himself. But for him and M. Duque, "who, bringing up the rear guard, rallied the battalion of Berthier, which was in flight, and being at the head of that of Montreal fired two hundred shots," the Senecas could on that July night in 1687 have celebrated a glorious victory as any in their annals.

The field at the top of this hill upon which the fort was situated, is strewn with cinders and pieces of charred wood in all directions, which, notwithstanding the many years it has been under cultivation are very abundant. This would seem to indicate that a high wind was blowing at the time it was destroyed, and that the conflagration was general. Many relics have been found here since this section was settled, which prove its Indian occupancy for many years. In 1890, on the occasion of our first visit, Mr. Daniel Ellis, a prominent resident of the town, showed us a beautiful carnelian seal of large size in a unique gold setting, that doubtless belonged to a French officer of rank, which was found several years ago within the inclosure of the fort. The original gold setting of French workmanship has, we believe, been loaned to the Cleveland Historical Society of Ohio, but Mr. Ellis has had another made to take its place. It is a rare relic of the invasion; and shows something of the beautiful appointments of Denonville's retinue.

After destroying everything of value at Gannagaro, its broad corn fields, its great stores of golden grain, and its last vestige of pomp as an Indian capital, Denonville turned the faces of his warriors toward the south, for the purpose of visiting the same measure of destruction upon Gannagare, the smaller Seneca settlement of the locality situated on the Ganargua. This village, though much smaller than Gannagaro, the capital, was nevertheless a place of much importance. Here it was that



the captives taken in their numerous wars by the Senecas were mostly domiciled, and here the pious Jesuit fathers gained an influence over the minds of their dusky auditors, that they failed to obtain in any of the other towns. It was called by them St. Michael, and its inhabitants were marked by a zeal in the "white man's" faith and teachings, that placed them far in advance, in so far as spiritual knowledge was concerned, of their more pagan brethren.

Yet, notwithstanding the fact that the Senecas had accorded to the good Jesuit missionaries every courtesy and kindness in their endeavor to establish the Christian faith among all of their people who were willing to embrace it, and thus set a most praiseworthy example of religious toleration, they drew a broad line of separation, between the affairs of church and state, and however leniently they might view the efforts of the "Good Fathers," to save the souls of men, the Senecas haughtily disdained all interference in the management of their tribal state, and as a nation of free, independent subjects ruled their realm as their fathers of old. Hence, while Gannagarae was doubtless under the influence of the Jesuits not a little in a religious sense, and while many of its inhabitants, perhaps, observed very strictly many of the forms and ceremonies of the Holy Catholic church as taught by the brethren in their forest mission, its political affairs were no less keenly looked after by true, devoted Seneca sachems, and its people were as one in their support of that sovereignty which owned Gannagaro as its capital.

Of this the French authorities in Canada were well aware, and hence Denonville was instructed to spare no pains to bring this haughty people, who set at defiance in their forest fastness the commands of the despotic rulers of Europe, to a sense of their inferior power and condition. Thus no village was to be spared in the whole Seneca domain, though it had sheltered Jesuit missionaries and was the home of the conquered

Hurons who had so long proved the faithful allies of France. Not only Gannagaro, the chief town, but Gannagarae the smaller village must be visited by fire and sword. That this was the spirit that actuated the French leaders when they set out on this, to them, most unfortunate expedition, is proven by the lengthy correspondence, bitter, and accrimonious, which passed prior and subsequently to this event between Gov. Dongan and Denonville.

From the tenor of that wordy controversy, it would seem that the English authorities openly accused the Jesuit missionaries in many instances of duplicity, and caring more in their intercourse with the Iroquois to subserve the interests of France, and make her the chief beneficiary in the rich fur trade of that time, than to save the souls of their dusky flocks, or convert them to the grand truths of the Christian faith. But this charge of duplicity against the French in their intercourse with the Six Nations could be brought against the English themselves with equal truth, and the impartial historian would be but poorly discharging his duty in reference to the events of that period, if he did not arraign them equally with their Gallic neighbors upon the same indictment. Even the Dutch, slow, methodical, plodding, and honest as they undoubtedly were in their early settlement of our Province, could not resist the temptation to a little fraud in their dealings with their Indian friends, as we find in the story of our colonial days that "it must be admitted that the Indians were not only deceived with regard to the market value of their commodities, but paid in counterfeit money. False beads were manufactured in the New Netherlands to such an extent that six white pieces of wampum came to equal no more than one Dutch stiver, whereas when the colony was planted the value of one stiver was four white wampum beads."

[19.]

The sum and substance of the whole matter was, that the beautiful domain of the Iroquois was such a jewel in the

broad field of American colonization, their friendship and alliance were of such great importance in extending the "march of empire" in the almost trackless forest, and the value of the trade with them so vast in a commercial view, that the French, Dutch, and English were intensely jealous of each other, and resorted to nearly every artifice and stratagem to outwit and circumvent one another in attaining their desired ends.

Therefore, for this very reason, it is extremely necessary for the student of our Colonial times, who desires to acquire a correct knowledge of the matters and events pertaining to them, not to confine his researches simply to one set of documents, but to scan the whole field with care, weigh well the evidence produced, and he will see that of the three great nations who were interested in planting this noble colony of New York, but little credit must be accorded to one over the other in all their dealings with the original owners of the soil, the aborigines. The Dutch should, perhaps, be given the first place for their fidelity in keeping their treaties sacred with the red men, and in generally dealing honestly with them in all their transactions. So far as the French and English were concerned, the bitter feuds and animosities that had been engendered between them for centuries upon the soil of Europe, were simply transplanted to the New World, and as the Iroquois stood between them in their ambitious projects to extend their territorial limits, that brave people were made most unwillingly a third party, over whose shoulder the crafty principals waged a war that ended only in the ruin of the proud Indian confederacy and the defeat of the French.

[19] Souvenir Bi-Centennial of Albany, page 3.

Gannagarae, or St. Michael, was Located in East Bloomfield—A Paradise for the Hunter and Fisherman—Ancient Indian Burial Places.

Gannagarae, to which we have seen the army of Denonville hastened, along the old trail which traversed the ridge of Boughton Hill in a southerly direction, was an Indian village of about thirty houses, built in the Iroquois plan of "long houses," each having from ten to thirteen fires. It was situated, as near as we can determine from all the evidence obtainable by historical reading and from personal investigation of its site, just north of the trail leading from the foot of Canandaigua lake to the Seneca villages on the Honey Creek, near the point where the old trail crosses the Ganargua, or, as it is more commonly called, Mud Creek, in the north eastern part of the town of East Bloomfield, Ontario county, N. Y. The site of this interesting historical locality is partially on the farm of Mrs. Johnson, a worthy widow lady, and one or two adjoining farms, the names of whose proprietors we did not learn. Near this point, Beaver Creek, as it was known in the pioneer days, but now, we believe, more commonly designated as Shaver Creek, forms a junction with the Ganargua. The center, or more thickly peopled portion of the old Indian town was upon a ridge or elevation more abrupt towards the west, some rods north of the highway leading from Canandaigua to East Bloomfield. In the olden time a branch trail passed the village on its eastern side, and led, doubtless, in a direction leading, north by west, to Gannagaro. Near the south front of the village, and quite near the present road, was a "deer lick," where antlers of that animal have been found, and near which have also been unearthed several rare relics. A few wild flags and a small expanse of marsh are all the signs visible of it to-day. To the north of this, bearing in a slightly eastward direction, extends a ravine, intersected at several points by minor ravines, to the extreme limits of the village, some three quarters of a mile. About midway of this ravine, in the



center of which flows a small brook, and nearly opposite the western front of the center of the old town, the hills or bluffs on either side gradually encroach upon the ravine, and again a little further to the north recede, and thus form, between the old village site and the burial place to the west, a beautiful natural amphitheater. This feature of the old village site cannot be seen from the road, but must be traversed to bring out all the singular and picturesque surroundings. To the north of the site of this once famous town, the country is undulating, with occasional steep bluffs near the course of the Ganargua. To the east the land is quite level, while to the south it rises quite perceptibly, and the blue hills in the distance bound our view. To the west the land also rises from the banks of the stream, and a beautiful country greets us in a charming variety of hill and dale.

Why this singular locality was chosen as the site of an important village, unless it was, indeed, as its surroundings would seem to indicate, a very paradise for the hunter and the fisherman in the early days, or its important position at the junction of the two trails before described, we are unable satisfactorily to determine. Certain it is that there were far more beautiful locations for a town in the immediate vicinity, and those far more conducive to health than the one we are describing. Yet the Senecas doubtless had good and sufficient reasons for establishing it where they did.

There is a local tradition that the French moved upon this town in two divisions, the one from the west, and the other along the branch trail from the north, and crossing the creek, met, on their errand of destruction, almost at the same moment, in the very center of the town. Of the truth of this we know not, but from quite a careful examination of the old site and of the approaches to it, such a movement on the part of an invading force would not be impracticable.

There is quite a diversity of opinion among Indianologists and historians as

to the exact location of this town. Marshall, Hosmer, Turner, as well as the most trustworthy Indian authorities, seem to point very plainly to this site on the Ganargua, as the seat of old Gannagarea, the "village of the captives," as some of the Jesuits have termed it, or St. Michael. Others who have treated of the subject, and some, we believe, who have made a personal examination, have come to the conclusion that the site was located elsewhere. While it is not our intention in this communication to enter into this controversy, such being entirely foreign to our purpose, we wish to state some of the reasons, after a careful examination of the ground and its position in relation to other and accepted localities, as well as studying thoroughly the conclusions of several of the distinguished writers we have named, for believing this the identical St. Michael destroyed by Denonville, in 1687.

According to the evidence furnished by the French writers who accompanied the expedition of Denonville, and who subsequently became its historians, the smaller Indian village adjacent to Gannagaro was situated "a short league to the south." Now, in accepting this statement of men who were actually upon the ground and saw the localities of which they wrote in 1687, it becomes us, as investigators anxious to arrive at the truth, to place ourselves, as nearly as possible, in the same position and amid the same surroundings that were theirs at the time of which they speak. In the hurried movements of an invading army, bent on pillage and destruction, in a strange, and to most of them an unknown region, absolute accuracy of detail in description of localities, or of distances from one point to another in their line of march, unless provided with surveyors, as this army was not, would well nigh be impossible. When we take into consideration the fact that this "Genesee Country" was then an almost trackless forest, that the scenes described by those French writers were enacted upon a stage so primitive and wild that we of to-day cannot conceive of its character, it is a marvel

that their accounts are so accurate and that such slight errors of distance are perceptible in their narratives. For after the lapse of more than two hundred years, and after the region traversed by them has been completely changed, or nearly so, from its wilderness state, by the refining hand of our higher civilization, we find in this one instance now under consideration but the slight error of less, perhaps, than one-half mile, in the distance between Gannagaro, the capital on Boughton Hill, and the smaller village of Gannagarea, on the Ganargua. And we find still further, upon personal investigation, that the French writers have given us but the general direction, south, which is correct, and have simply omitted the more particular description of east of south, as the old site of Gannagarea actually is from Gannagaro.

Hence we think from the description of the French themselves, in regard to its distance and direction, that there can be but little doubt that the old Indian village we are describing was the one towards which their march was directed along the old trail leading south-east from Boughton Hill. This is also the opinion of Mr. Marshall, who wrote a very particular account in 1847, which was subsequently verified by Blacksmith, a venerable Seneca sachem, who was then living at Tonawanda. The name and location of this village are also well preserved in the traditions of the Senecas, and it was known as Chinohah-geh, meaning literally in their language "On the slope of the valley." Geo. H. Harris, Esq., a later investigator, who has, we believe, personally visited the locality several times, also inclines to the opinion that Mr. Marshall was correct in his conclusions. In fact, we known from actual investigation that there is no other locality indicative of Aboriginal occupancy in all this immediate vicinity, that would at all answer the description of the French respecting the important village of Gannagarea. It occupied, according to Mr. Harris, "an area of about eighty acres on the

southern part of Lot 13, in the present town of East Bloomfield, Ontario county, N. Y., while nearly sixty acres of the flats along the creek were under cultivation."

At the distance of nearly a mile west of this locality, or perhaps further, there is an ancient Indian burial place, but very few evidences that a town of any size existed. Also at the distance of one-half mile to the south, up the Ganargua, skeletons have been exhumed and quite a number of relics of Indian origin, but nothing that would warrant the belief that it was the site of a village with importance. This is not the case of Gannagarea, for after two quite thorough surveys, one in 1890, and the other in 1892, we can truly say that we have little doubt but that this is the true site of St. Michael.

Even to this day, and we have been assured that they were far more numerous in the early days of the settlement, many proofs exist that this village was destroyed by fire. On the western edge of the bluff or slope where the central part of the town was situated, our attention was attracted to a locality, perhaps of some two rods in circumference, that presented an appearance entirely different from other portions of the field. On examination we found the soil of a very dark color for quite a depth, and so marked and peculiar, that we came to the conclusion that it must have been one of the store houses for corn, alone left, of all else, for the Frenchmen to destroy. The peculiar appearance of the base of this locality would indicate that fire was the agent employed in its ruin; and we firmly believe that had we continued our search to a greater depth we would have been rewarded by evidence of a more positive character. A short distance from this point, we found several portions of gun locks and trimmings of a very ancient pattern, that presented the appearance of having been warped or twisted by exposure to intense heat. The query naturally arises, was this one of the store houses for corn, destroyed by order of Denonville? and were these broken fragments of weapons, the remains of the Seneca's "miserable guns," as Belmont terms them, which he commanded his troops to place in a heap and destroy?

[To Be Continued.]



**More About Gannagarae—Jesuit Missionaries—An Ancient Silver Spoon and its Cabalistic Marking—Other Interesting Relics.**

*[Concluded from Last Week.]*

There is another circumstance connected with our examination of the site of this ancient Indian village (Gannagarae, in East Bloomfield), which would seem to induce the belief that it was hastily destroyed and precipitately abandoned by its inhabitants. In studying the locality to the northeast and east of the position last described, where the larger portion of their dwellings must have been situated, we found several well defined localities, in the ashes and cinders of which were quite a large number of beads and other ornaments that had been broken and spoiled by exposure to the action of fire. On all the other parts of the field we found beads, pendants, and other ornaments, in a fine state of preservation, but the moment those found where the houses were destroyed were exposed to the air, or pressed but slightly in the hand, they crumbled and lost their form, as do other substances, whose fibre and composition have been destroyed by heat. Now, if we are correct in our conclusion that these ornaments and other articles were destroyed in the conflagration of the houses of their owners, does it not offer some additional proof that this must have been one of the Seneca villages, whose cabins Denonville affirms "were laid waste and burned?" [20] And if so, which one of the four so destroyed in this expedition could this have been, if it was not Gannagarae?

Owing to the fact that this village, (Gannagarae) was known to have been occupied for quite a period by the Jesuit missionaries resident among the Senecas, and that they gained an influence over its inhabitants, greater, perhaps, than in any other canton or town within their domain, it has always been a matter of paramount importance with Indianologists and antiquarians, to endeavor to discover some evidence of priestly occupation. It was known to have been the home, for quite a time, of that eminent Jesuit, Father James Fremin, who was Superior of the mis-

sions in this region. From what we can learn of the early explorers here, many of whom visited the locality soon after the pioneer advent, perhaps, simply out of curiosity, and with no intention to glean information on any specified subject, not a few relics were found that would tend to associate the Jesuits with the town. Mr. George H. Harris says, in his very interesting account, that he has "considerable evidence of the quantity and nature of the relics found there, to confirm Mr. Marshall's statement."

On our first visit to this site, in 1890, Mr. Johnson, upon whose farm the old burial place belonging to the Indian village is situated, kindly gave us permission to excavate there, with a view to discover, if possible, any traces of the Jesuit occupancy, by some peculiar ornaments or relics that would tend to associate the wearer with the faith he professed while living. But owing to want of time and other unfavorable circumstances, we did not meet with any measure of success. On our last visit, in July, 1892, we were shown a very rare relic, found by Mr. Johnson, that we think gives us quite positive evidence of having once been the property of the Jesuits. It is a silver spoon, or ladle, as in fact the first of those useful articles really were, of a very ancient pattern, and, notwithstanding its long exposure to the elements, shows even now that it has been a fine piece of work.

This unique specimen of the silversmith's art of a former century, is about seven and one quarter inches in length, from the top of the handle to the bottom of the ladle, in a straight line. The handle, which is nearly straight, is about four and one-half inches in length, nearly one-fourth of an inch in width at the point of its junction with the top of the spoon, or ladle, and terminating in a singular form of ornamentation at the top. The body of the spoon or ladle, is some two and one quarter inches across at the widest point, and of a depth corresponding to its size. In the hollow of the spoon, just at the point where it leaves the

base of the handle, is an ancient device, trade mark, or other inscription, resembling, as nearly as we could discern by an examination with quite a strong glass, two torches in an upright position, with a third one, a little longer than the others, between them, inverted. At the distance of a little less than one-half an inch from this small device, further toward the center of the hollow of the bowl, is a square marking, formed of a simple cut or line in the metal, engraved by some sharp implement, and the square thus formed is so placed that one corner of the same comes exactly under the center of the little device before mentioned, while the other or opposite corner marks nearly the center of the bowl. Through this square thus formed, runs another marking, in a straight line with the center of the handle to the middle of the bowl.

What the true significance of the devices upon this antique article is, we know not, but it has been suggested to the writer in conversing with friends who are conversant with the symbols and usages of the early Catholic church, that the torches in the upright position mentioned, might have typified the mission of the Holy Jesuit Fathers, to go among all people and strive, according to the teachings of their Christian faith, to save, or light to immortal happiness and glory, the souls of men. The inverted torch, on the contrary, might have symbolized the arch destroyer, Death, and served to convey the idea that although they were sent to proclaim the news of salvation to all men, their mission was incomplete without warning them of the certainty of death and of the judgment to come. This interpretation of that portion of the device, when we take into consideration the character of the early Jesuit missionaries, and the noble work they set out, amid appalling difficulties and dangers, to accomplish in the forests of America, may have great weight, and afford a very strong argument in associating the Jesuit mission with the history of this old and important Indian settlement.

But we do not wish to place our opin-

ion in this matter in the place of history, for we wish simply to state facts as nearly as possible as we find them, leaving to others better qualified, all speculation upon this subject. Could we but examine all of the relics which have been taken away from this locality that would have have thrown light upon the occupancy and mission of the Jesuit Fathers, we think but little doubt would remain that this antique spoon and the others were once their property. That it was not used by the Indians themselves, is evidenced from the fact that several rude ladles made of horn or wood have been found since the early settlement, and show quite a different origin in an artistic point of view.

Of the other relics found here, it is sufficient to say that they do not differ materially from those found on the site of any other well established Indian village. The relics here and at Gannagarae are almost identical in form and finish, although those found here are, so far as we have made a close examination, of richer material, if anything, than those found on the site of the old capital itself. Besides the relics which are of unmistakable Indian origin, there are many here that were without doubt left by the French during their brief invasion of this region. Gun locks, gun trimmings, gun flints, of many colors, as well as several varieties of rare beads, point very strongly to the work of the cunning French artisan. In fact, if we may believe the accounts left by the pioneers, [21], at the time this local region was settled a large number of French weapons were found here and were utilized in making and repairing the few agricultural implements used in subduing their wilderness homes.

With this allusion to these two important Seneca villages, Gannagarae or St. James, and Gannagarae or St. Michael, and their history, we must bring this crude and imperfect sketch to a close. To the kind readers who have accorded us their attention and courtesy, by its perusal from the beginning to its close, we wish to express our heartfelt thanks for the homage



thus given our humble efforts. Perhaps, at some future time, should they not utterly tire of the recital, when another summer shall gild with its glorious sunlight the loved landscapes of our local region into "things of beauty," we may explore more of the route of this famous expedition, which entwined so few laurels about the brow of its commander as a soldier, or added so little to his reputation as a Christian gentleman.

THE END.

[20] See Denonville's Proclamation, or "Process Verbal," Paris Doc.

[21] See Reminiscences of James Sperry, History Phelps and Gorham's Purchase, page 194.

A Correction.

*Editors Times:*—In your last issue, in the article from my pen, entitled "With Denonville," I find that the language used in referring to the old Indian village of Ganagaræ, is somewhat misleading, and fearing it may lead to error, perhaps, in considering the extent and population of this town, I beg you will do me the favor to insert this correction in your next. In the hurry of preparing the manuscript for publication, I did not state as fully as I should, all the circumstances in the case, or enter into the details of its construction and social life as much as the subject demanded.

Ganagaræ was somewhat different from the other villages in the Seneca canton, from the fact that it was peopled mainly by captives from other tribes taken in battle. The Hurons predominated, and as they had previously been under the teaching of the Jesuit missionaries, had acquired many ideas of civilized life, that gave them no small advantage over their pagan neighbors among the Senecas. And when the Jesuits subsequently established missions in the country of the Sonontouans, it was with joy that those old converts of the missionaries, the Hurons, welcomed them to Ganagaræ and strove to live, as far as their surroundings would permit, in a decent, semi-civilized social state.

Hence we find that many families had separate cabins or homes of their own, and although the characteristic "long houses" of the Iroquois were there, many of them contained but part of their occupants, and, perhaps, at no time did the population of Ganagaræ exceed 300 persons. A chapel was erected there by the Jesuits and the observances of the church were strictly enjoined. Many of these Hurons were men of lofty character, and have left noble records behind them of honest, God fearing Christians. Hence, when we say that this village contained some thirty houses, let it be understood that they were not all "long houses," accommodating many persons, but that many families lived separately in the way they had been taught by the Jesuit fathers.

IRVING W. COATES.